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# 360Zine

Issue 61 | December 2011

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*



**SKYRIM**

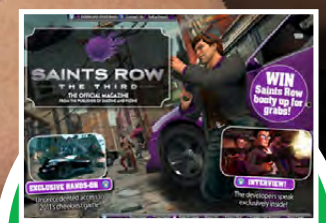
*Game of the year?  
Find out inside!*



**PREVIEWED!**

## UFC UNDISPUTED 3

*Exclusive interview and in-depth hands-on  
with next year's King of the Cage!*



**SAINTS ROW:  
THE THIRD  
BONUS MAGAZINE**



**PLUS!**

**REVIEWED!**  
**MODERN WARFARE 3**

**REVIEWED!**  
**AC REVELATIONS**

**REVIEWED!**  
**HALO CE ANNIVERSARY**

**REVIEWED!**  
**RAYMAN ORIGINS**



CONTROL →







NAVIGATE →

|02

# Welcome to 360Zine



Can you believe it? Just a few short weeks ago we were talking about the summer drought and now the TV is churning out Christmas ads like some sort of needy child. It's just a relentless roll, this videogaming lark.

With silly season very nearly over, it should come as no surprise to find this issue of 360Zine is the most review-packed of the year. We've got the full lowdown on the massive Modern Warfare 3, the spellbinding Skyrim and the salubrious Saints Row The Third, as well as Assassin's Creed and Rayman Origins.

And with the next batch of games only just around the corner, we've gone in at the deep end on the biggest early 2012 release, the brutally unflinching UFC Undisputed 3.

Enjoy the issue!

Jon Denton, Editor

360Zine@gamerzines.com

**360Zine  
FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to  
tell us what  
you think of  
the new issue

## MEET THE TEAM

Probably the best  
games writers on  
the planet



**Dave  
Scammell**  
A true Saint.



**Thomas  
Worthington**  
The silent killer.



**GTA V**  
First look inside

## Don't miss! *This month's top highlights*



**UFC UNDISPUTED 3**

INTERVIEW + HANDS ON!



**Modern Warfare 3**

Reviewed and rated



**Assassin's Creed  
Revelations**

Full review



**Skyrim**  
Game of the year?

## QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

GTA V  
UFC Undisputed  
3 Preview  
UFC Undisputed  
3 Interview  
Modern  
Warfare 3

Skyrim  
Assassin's Creed  
Revelations  
Halo : Combat  
Evolved  
Anniversary  
Rayman Origins

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Without the multimedia playing, the magazine will look correct, but you will be missing out on all of the extra content built into each issue, like videos, animated screenshots, annotations, quizzes, competitions and more.

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CONTROL →





TWO ASSASSINS.

ONE DESTINY.



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 15TH



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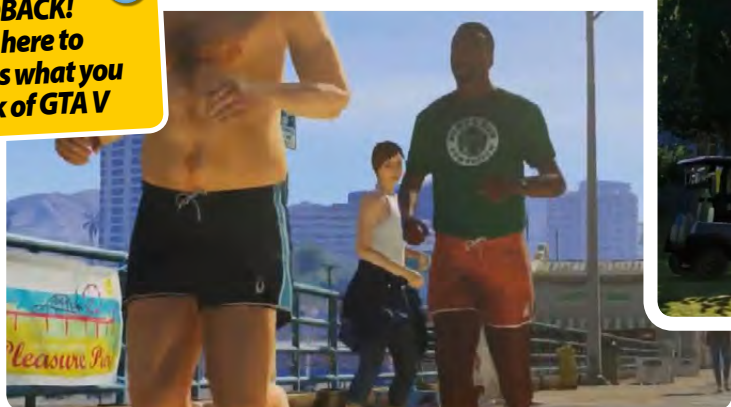






Dogs confirmed! For the first time ever in GTA, pooches!

**PREVIEW FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to tell us what you think of GTA V



Golf... confirmed!  
Running... confirmed!  
Alcohol... confirmed!  
Expect a lot of this kind of talk over the next year or so.



**"The whole thing's backed up by an animation system that makes other openworlds look a bit daft by comparison"**

## FIRST LOOK

# Grand Theft Auto V

*California dreamin' on such a winter's day*

### What's the story?

After weeks of rumours and speculation, Rockstar finally unleashed the first GTA V trailer to the masses and nearly killed the Internet in the process. The series is heading back west, to the city of Los Santos and its surrounding countryside, in what promises to be the largest Rockstar openworld yet.

### What else do we know?

Well, there's plenty of detail in that trailer if you have the time or the inclination to go searching for it. And if you don't, here are a few key tidbits we've noticed. First up, there are dogs in the game. Secondly, and more importantly, planes have returned. It's set in the present day, and tells a story about money, the American Dream and the recession, but in that uniquely semi-satirical way that Rockstar North have made their own over the years. Apart from that, we're still not sure who the lead character will be, although a grey haired middle-aged man makes more than one appearance in the trailer, and the whole thing's backed up by an animation system that makes other openworlders look a bit daft by comparison.

### When do we get more?

Well, you know how Rockstar are when it comes to dripfeeding information, but after all these classics, would we have it any other way? For now, it's trailers, but be assured that when the big R are showing GTA V to the press, we'll be there front and centre as always.

### Anything else to declare?

There has been murmuring aplenty about release dates, with the numbers 24 and 5 appearing in the trailer. To some, this means it's coming out in May next year, but we'd be mightily surprised if Rockstar unleashed a new GTA on the world with that little time to build the hype. Don't expect it until late 2012 or even 2013, purely based on the promotional schedules of Grand Theft Auto IV and Red Dead Redemption.





# SAINTS ROW

## — THE THIRD —



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



STRAP IT ON 18.11.11



XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE

PS3 PlayStation 3

PC DVD-ROM



SAINTSROW.COM





UFC  
UNDISPUTED 3

Publisher: THQ

Developer: Yuke's

Heritage:

UFC Undisputed series

Link: www.

ufcundisputed.com

ETA: 17th February

**PREVIEW  
FEEDBACK!**  
Click here to  
tell us what you  
think of **UFC  
Undisputed 3**

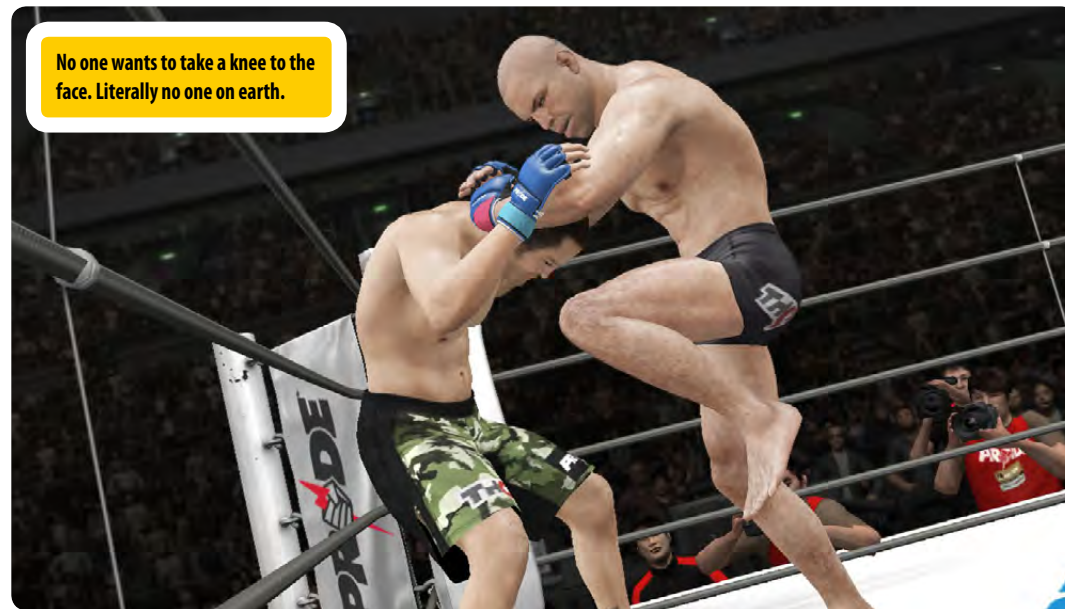
## SPECIAL PREVIEW

UFC  
Undisputed 3*Taking a knee to the face never felt so good*

**M**MA fighters are some of the nicest people on the planet, sitting just behind Zen Buddhists and Hugh Jackman. Ask anyone who's met one of the UFC's roster, and they'll probably say the same thing. From a grass roots level, it's a sport so steeped in respect, admiration, discipline and hard work that it turns almost all of the people involved into thoroughly pleasant human beings. Not that you'd know it when they're slamming their patellas into their opponent's septums.

Like the sport it represents, UFC Undisputed is a pretty misunderstood series. To most, it's a knockout-heavy brawler aimed at the casual gamer, not one of those 'proper' fighting games that people get all worked up about. In reality, this is about as far from the truth as Wanderlei's nose is from the centre of his face. UFC Undisputed, and specifically UFC Undisputed 3, is as technical as they come. Cancels, ➤

No one wants to take a knee to the face. Literally no one on earth.



The lighting and shaders actually change from PRIDE mode to the regular UFC matches.



UFC  
UNDISPUTED 3

Want to recreate all those classic PRIDE moments? Well now you can.



## > UFC 3 continued

feints, combos, timing, spacing... they're all here. And the brilliant thing is, despite being every inch a videogame, this time around it really does feel like Mixed Martial Arts.

Taking what they've learned over two successful series entries, the joint

team of Yuke's in Japan and THQ's own Santa Monica outfit have refined and redefined just what makes an MMA game great. The fast striking is still there, but the hits are harder and the tactics broader. There are new positions and animations on the ground, too – stuff Jiu-jitsu practitioners will salivate over as their opponents flop around



like the proverbial land-dwelling fish. The wrestling game has seen huge improvements, with much more fluid transitions between standing and takedowns, far more counters and switches and new positions like standing back control and seated-cage mount. As exciting (or baffling, depending on your level of expertise) as all this sounds though, all that really matters is this: UFC Undisputed 3 is the closest videogames have come to capturing the tactical intensity and bursts of raw animalistic drama that make MMA such a fascinating and compelling spectacle.

Nowhere is that more evident than in UFC Undisputed 3's sparkling and surprisingly dense PRIDE mode. For those not in the know, PRIDE is a now-defunct Japanese MMA

promotion that was once bigger than the UFC and played hosts to the world's most popular fighters in the early-to-mid 2000s. Rampage Jackson? Shogun Rua? Minatauro Nogueria? They all made their name here.

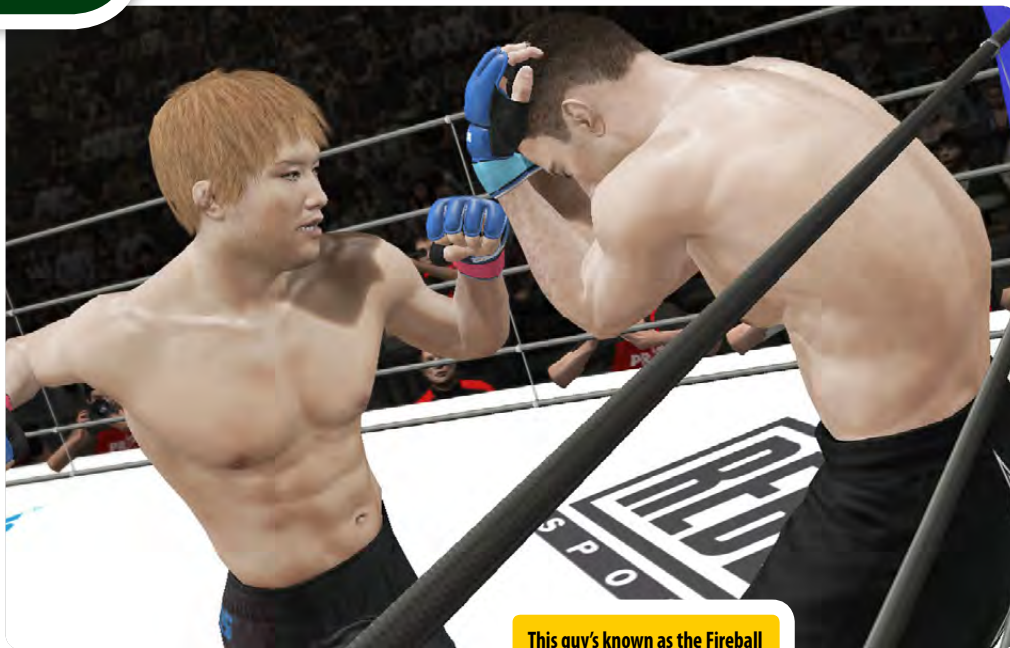
Apart from the fact the action takes place in a gleaming white ring and the entrances (new this year) are daft laser-drenched affairs, the biggest difference between PRIDE and the UFC is the ruleset. For some reason, the Japanese thought it was fine for people to punt each other in the head when on the ground. Tough to watch in real life, but bloody brilliant in the safety of a videogame scrap.

Unlike EA MMA's equivalent effort which saw these brutal headstrikes relegated to a pseudo-QTE, here they're very much a part of the action. Shoot





## UFC 3 UNDISPUTED



This guy's known as the Fireball Kid. Don't get excited though, as he's not a real kid.

### > UFC 3 continued

for a takedown from too far out and you can fully expect a slug of metatarsal to the nose, or your opponent swiftly taking your back and burying his knee into your temple. It changes the in-ring strategy for technical players and it makes those just hungry for headkicks roar with that kind of bloodlust-fuelled laughter that some people will just never quite understand.

It's not all about stomps and headkicks, though. UFC Undisputed 3 plays a mean game back in the familiar fenced walls of the Octagon. There's more personality on show this year, for starters. The aforementioned ring entrances help to set the atmosphere, but it's the nuances of the individual

fighters that'll have fans punching the air. Anderson's Matrix-like head movement is in there, and Machida's befuddling Shotkokan stance is perfectly captured. And of course, it wouldn't be a UFC game without the familiar rotation of Chuck Liddell's infamous overhand right. Instead of just including these as simple animations though, they're actually fundamental assets for the fighter you've chosen. More so than ever before, you can really roleplay your combatant of choice and try to replicate his style in the ring.

Whether it's a five-round grappling war or a 17-second knockout, UFC Undisputed 3 has finally captured the most exciting moment of all of >







**UFC 3**  
UNDISPUTED



It's not as savage as it looks. Well okay, maybe it is.



Quinton Rampage Jackson, in the pre-A Team days.

## > UFC 3 continued

MMA, too – the finish. The previous two games focused on flash KOs, one-shot 'kills' that saw the opponent crumple to the canvas like a discarded marionette. That's still in there, but it's rarer, and you can now dive in and finish your fallen foe off on the ground until the ref yanks you off, just like real life. More common, though, is a knockdown that gives you the opportunity to finish, and also your opponent a chance to save himself. They can move their head on the ground, or keep their hands up to block, and frantically try to grab hold of a leg just to buy themselves a few seconds for recovery. Meanwhile, the

aggressor is desperately raining down punches. Go too hard and they might wear themselves out though, or press for a submission too fervently and they might actually end up on the bottom. It's a constantly evolving game of risk and reward, and you're never truly out of a fight until the ref says so.

During our demo time, we had no access to the game's single-player component, but hopefully the career mode can veer itself away from the drudgery of stat management and focus itself on getting you back into the action as frequently as possible. That's where you want to be in UFC Undisputed 3 – standing in the middle of that ring, looking your opponent in the eye, ready for war. Bring it on. ●







**IN STORES 18.11.11**  
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**16**  
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## INTERVIEW

# Neven Dravinski



*The UFC Producer talks us through Undisputed 3*

### How has the extra development time helped to improve the game?

The game just got so big that it just necessitated the time. At first we were just going to put in the WEC guys but the UFC doesn't have seasons, right, so the roster's always changing. Not so much with the top guys, but it changes a lot in the lower tiers with those players that are up and coming, so really wanting to put in PRIDE and really having that be a differentiator from the previous games just necessitated the extra time. Essentially it's a game within a game – you have Bas Rutten and Steven Quadros doing the audio, new models, new animations, new arenas that need to be tweaked, etc.

### It changes the strategy you'll use too, right?

Absolutely – a position like North South in UFC rules, you're like 'well a guy could submit me from there but no big deal', but now all of a sudden in

**"Essentially, PRIDE mode is a game within a game"**

PRIDE people are trying to get there because you can use knees to the head etc. I think it's going to be really cool when people get a chance to play.

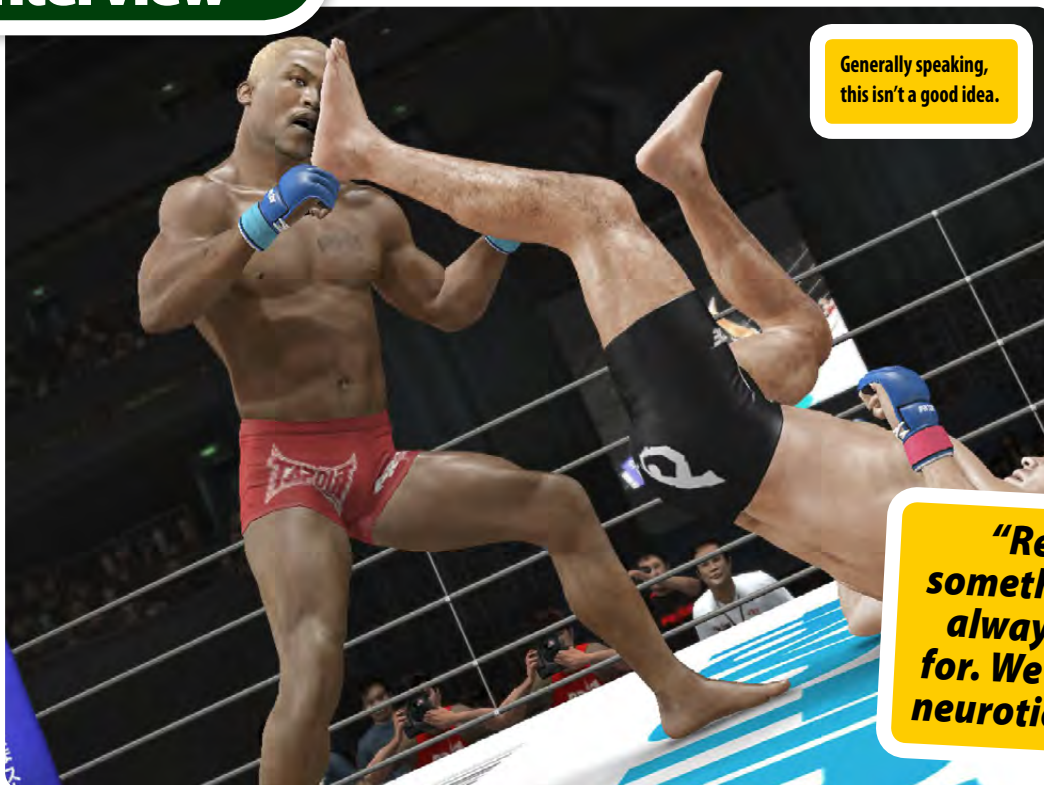
Like I said, it's essentially a game within a game, but I think the UFC game is better for it – just the fact you can bring PRIDE guys into the UFC and vice versa and do mirror matches just makes the game richer. Among all the general improvements to the gameplay, having PRIDE in there just puts it over the top for me.

### There's been a lot of work done in capturing the nuances of individual fighters it seems...

We actually brought in a lot of guys to do motion capture, guys like Frank ➤

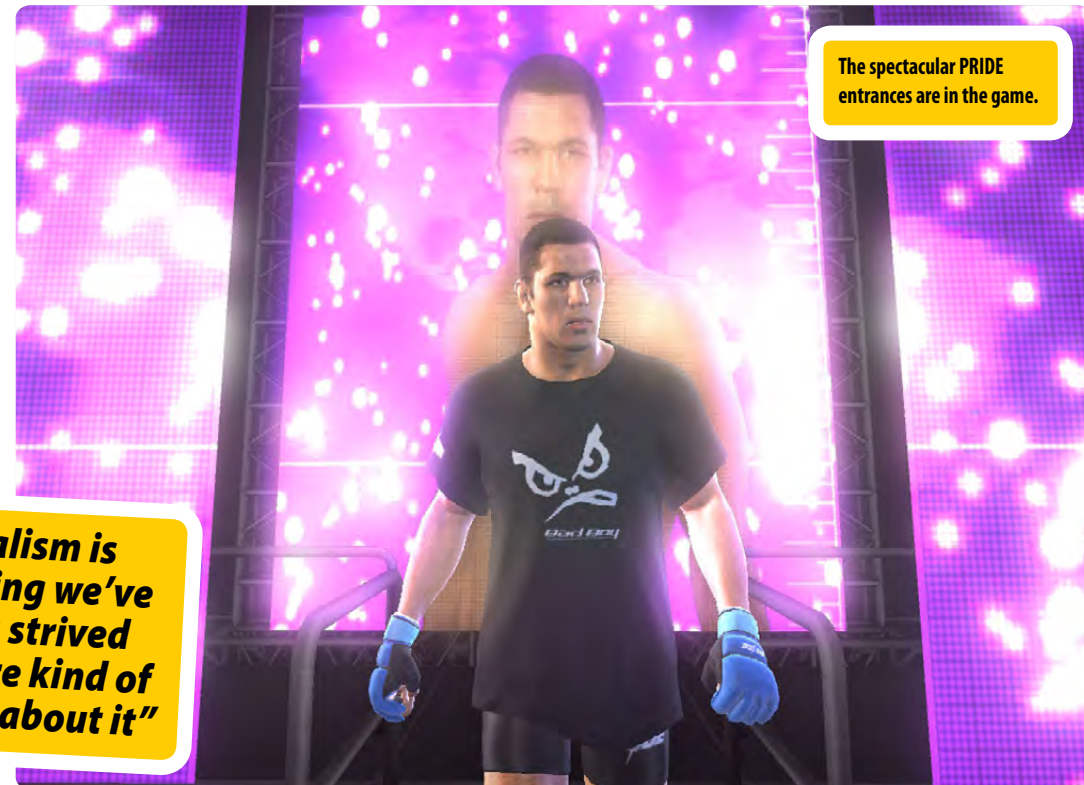






Generally speaking,  
this isn't a good idea.

*"Realism is  
something we've  
always strived  
for. We're kind of  
neurotic about it"*



The spectacular PRIDE  
entrances are in the game.

## > UFC Interview cont.

Mir and Nate Diaz. it's something we've always really strived for – in fact, we're kind of neurotic about it. There are a lot of guys who came to this team to work with us because they were UFC fans or MMA fans, and those details like 'oh can we get that?' or 'whose sponsor is he wearing?'... it's tough to keep up with but it shows in the game. The end product is all that matters, and when people see that, the fighters see that and they're like 'oh you've got my one jab!' In fact, at the last fight we had Chuck Liddell taking on Rampage Jackson in PRIDE

rules, and Chuck said, "I'm going to lose, I suck at games," and I said "Look, you're going to play with amateur controls. When you need to get up you just flick down and stand up, and all you need to do is hold RB and hit Y or B. That's then either going to do a headkick, Chuck's superman punch or the overhand right."

He was like "That's awesome, you've got my overhand right?" and I replied "Yeah, obviously!" He literally was just doing his moves, and when I watched the fight back it was just like a Chuckfight. He was just winging that overhand right bomb and throwing the headkick.

## It's nice to be able to roleplay isn't it? It's part of it.

Absolutely. Without question. You really can't help but get into it. Everyone has a perception of what these guys are in their own mind, and you want Anderson Silva to move like Anderson Silva; you want Jon Jones to do his crazy spinning elbow. And then when you look at their stats, you want to know that they're right. A lot of effort and detail goes into making sure that we're being legitimate. We're just as big a fan of the MMA as anyone out there, so it's really, really important to us to maintain that authenticity.







*"We've actually flown in a lot of guys from all over the country to help us test and tune the game"*



*He's not shy, is he? Takes a real man to wear blue skinny-fits.*

## > UFC Interview cont.

### How have you managed to cope with being 'hardcore' and broad simultaneously?

We did our development a little differently this year. We wanted it to be more accessible so we added amateur controls and took out things like the passive transition defence that we added last time out and wasn't working the way we wanted it to.

We do get a lot of technical questions. We've actually flown in a lot of guys from all over the country, hardcore members of our community and people who are at the top of the

leaderboards, to help us test for exploits and held us tune the game. On top of that we've also brought in some pro fighting game players and a few casual sports gamers and focus tested from the beginning of development. It was something that was different, but really helped us in tuning the game for this entire process.

It's been in development for five years and just goes into a box every now and then, so we kind of knew what the combat system was. It was about fine-tuning animations. You know, the little things like you knock a guy down and have that aspect of







## > UFC Interview cont.

wanting to finish him. That sort of adrenaline rush never felt clean to me in the past. You'd knock the guy down and then you'd kind of lumber over to him if you're tired...

So there are all these little tweaks that we were able to put in this year that make the game flow better; make the game smoother. Like sways on the ground, for example. Basically, it was just something that came out of 'hey this sucks. When I get knocked down all I can do is block? Let me sway please!' and that turned into this whole dynamic where if you sway that opens up your transition window and then you're more likely to get out of a position. That extra time in development has just allowed us to make a better product.

## Talk us through the improvements in the grappling...

Well I think we just wanted to bring up the ground game more. The ground game is one of the hardest things we do – certainly human-on-human interaction. I have friends at other developers that say 'I can't believe anyone complains about your game. When I look at what you do, the amount of junk you have to deal with is absurd', and that's really true, and I have the grey hairs to prove it, but I think we're managing to open a lot of eyes with what we're able to do in the industry from a physics and animation standpoint.

We believe that the ground game is something that we really excel at, so again more time for development, more moves and more nuance, so that people go 'oh wow they have that in!'



Lil' Evil, back in more youthful times.

## It seems like this series is as responsible for the sport's growth as some of the fights themselves?

Yeah, and it's something the UFC recognises and has done from the start. We are the digital arm of their march for global domination. With our digital reach we're able to get into territories where there's no UFC broadcast and no UFC on TV.

The best compliment I ever got was from when I was in Holland. A guy who ran an MMA school said: "When kids come to my school they either know all the positions from playing the game, or I tell them go and play the UFC game and learn the positions." That was such a huge compliment to get; that it actually can help people learn about the sport. ●





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# Call of Duty Modern Warfare 3

*Once again, it's time to answer the Call of Duty*

**T**hwup thwup thwup. Those three little sounds are probably going to define this entire console generation. Almost all of us have succumbed at some point. Thwup thwup thwup. +100. You got promoted. Give us more. More. More!

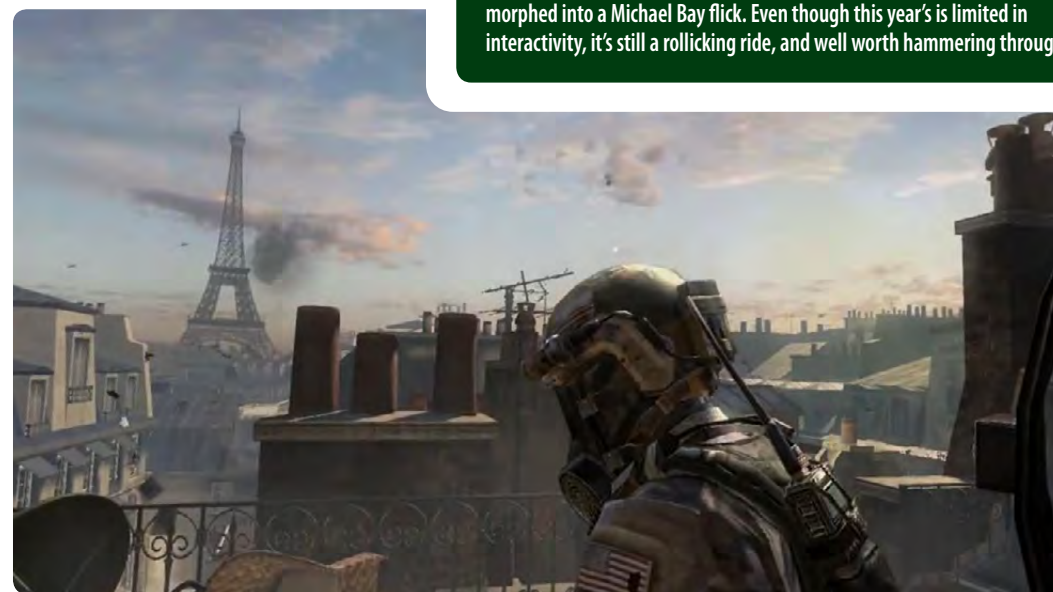
In last month's review of Battlefield 3, we likened Call Of Duty to a

McDonald's meal when DICE's work was like a fillet steak. That might seem like a criticism, but in truth, there's very little wrong with a McDonald's meal. You know what you're getting. It's dirty, cheap and a little bit nasty, but it tastes good, and five minutes later you want some more. You might even get a milkshake.

Call of Duty Modern Warfare 3 is every bit a fast food gaming experience. From the unrelenting charge of its campaign to the horribly addictive and completely unevolved multiplayer, this is a game about instant gratification. It gives millions and millions what they want without



A couple of moments border on controversial, but in truth there's nothing that matches 'No Russian'.



## WAR GAMES

Three games in one?



**Campaign  
fame**



**A bit  
special**



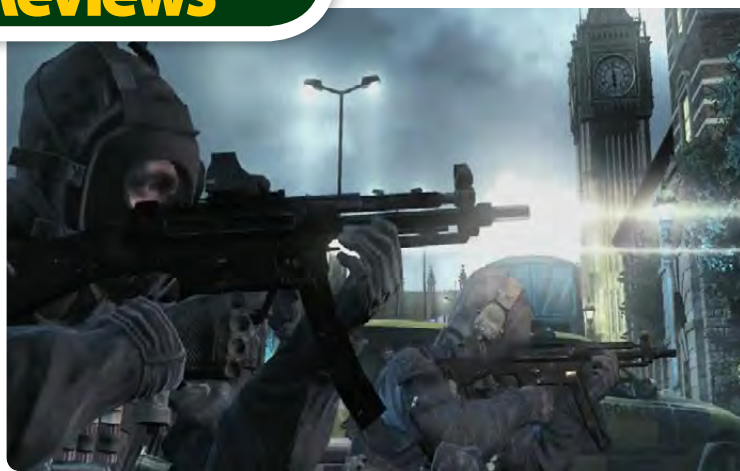
**All  
for one**



## Campaign fame

The truth is, not many people really care about CoD's campaign any more. What was once a chilling and terrifying look at the horror of war has morphed into a Michael Bay flick. Even though this year's is limited in interactivity, it's still a rollicking ride, and well worth hammering through.





The campaign jumps from set piece to set piece, rarely affording you the time to realise it's actually pretty vacuous.



## > Modern Warfare 3 cont.

making them wait. It's a french fry – or should that be a freedom fry?

Just like your tri-pronged McDonald's takeaway then, Call of Duty Modern Warfare 3 has its own burger, drink and fries. Campaign, Multiplayer and Spec Ops are all given equal billing on the game's splash page, with no effort made on presentation or sexy menus. Here's what you've got. Now get stuck in.

The obvious point of entry is campaign, although how many of CoD's enormous audience actually

bothers with it is dubious. Nevertheless, this first outing from the team of Modern Warfare masters Infinity Ward and the newly formed Sledgehammer Games, is a riot. It's almost completely devoid of proper systemic gameplay, instead entirely focused on hurling you into the kind of cement-shredding, bullet-spewing action that is almost a physical assault on the senses.

For what it's trying to do – create a seamless, relentless ride of adrenaline, character, quick-shot narrative and New Year's Eve-standard fireworks – it's

great. Just stick on Battlefield 3 or Homefront's campaign in comparison. It might not have the class of Halo or the breadth of Far Cry, but this is just the type of noisy bluster that it tries to be.

**"It might not have the class of Halo or the breadth of Far Cry, but this is just the noisy bluster it tries to be"**

And there's nothing wrong with that.

It helps that Infinity Ward are masters of staging. Every mission starts with either a breathtaking war-torn skyline or a gameplay-shifting mechanical twist (frog suits, AC-130, etc), and you're positively rammed through each level at breakneck speed, rarely given the chance to realise there's not much actual game going on underneath the madness that's tearing through your HDTV. Again, it's fast food gaming. Enjoy it for what it is.

Anyway that's the burger done. You'll probably want a drink to wash it down. Spec Ops won't last you very long unless you're the type to obsess over top ratings, but while it's there, it's a fine blast. You know the drill from Modern Warfare 2 – two-player co-operative mini missions that focus on a specific gameplay style. So you might be helping your mate out by sniping from a rooftop or charging through the Parisian catacombs. Some are better than others, but all are worth bashing through.

The real meal, though, is the large vat of fries that is the multiplayer. Just >

## FREEZE FRAME

Taking you through the game one step at a time...



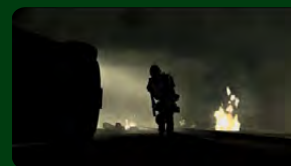
### 10 MINUTES

Noise. Noise noise noise. Nothing is quite as in-your-face as a Call of Duty campaign.



### 1 HOUR

It's World War 3 and you're stuck smack-bang in the middle of it. Deal with it, soldier.



### 2 HOURS

The pace is picking up and if you're not careful you'll get left behind – keep on moving.



### 4 HOURS

Every time there's actual shooting to do, MW3 is a little dull. Thankfully, it never lasts that long.



### 6 HOURS

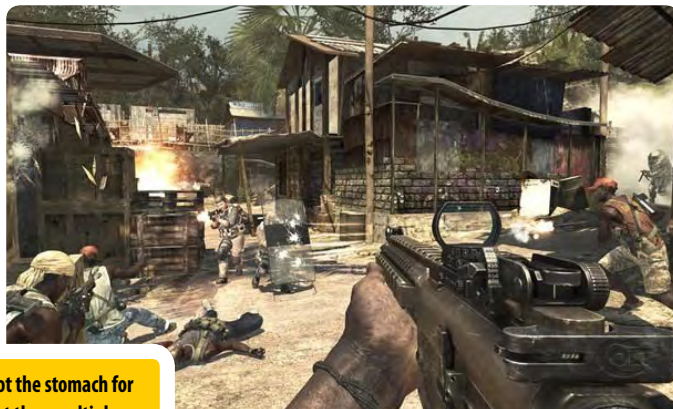
It's all over. Short, sharp and silly. On to multiplayer and Spec Ops with you, Marine.







If you've got the stomach for punishment then multiplayer is still horribly addictive.



### > Modern Warfare 3 cont.

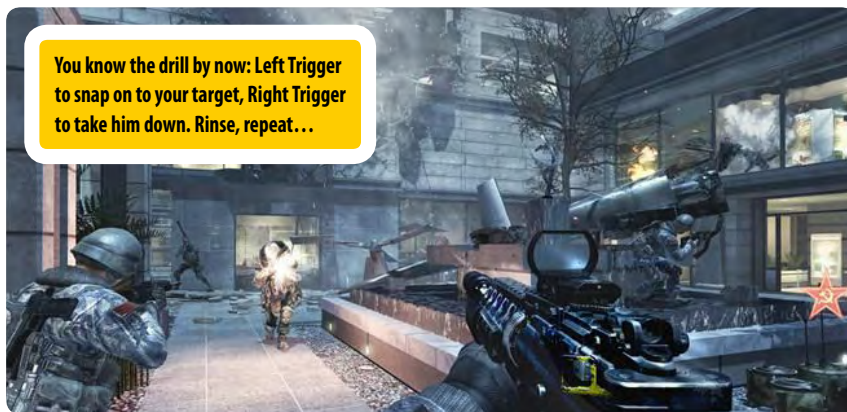
one more. It'll keep you stuck in the loop for hours. Like a sports franchise, very little has actually been changed beyond a few tweaks to killstreaks (you can now choose an option that allows you to stack them even when you die), a couple of new gametypes and 16 samey maps.

It's losing its appeal, though. There'll still be millions who love that thwup thwup thwup rush, and in truth, it had us for a good while, but the matchmaking is ludicrous. We're not Sandy Ravage, but after hundreds of hours in CoD multiplayer, we shouldn't be suffering the kind of ignominy that this has put us through. People have got so good at camping, quickscoping and dropshotting that it's hard to compete, which is why matchmaking should compensate. God knows what it's like for someone who's never even tried CoD online before. A spirit-crushing exercise in misery, surely.

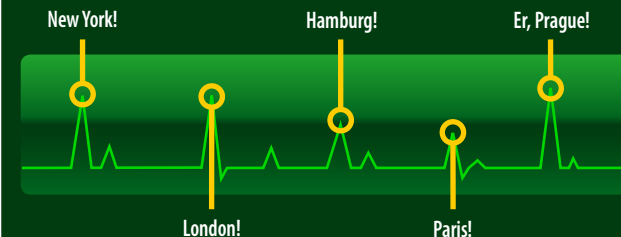
It's not really a slight on the actual game, though. When you get a good



You know the drill by now: Left Trigger to snap on to your target, Right Trigger to take him down. Rinse, repeat...



## PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



game going, it's still compelling in that 'constant stream of reward' kind of way, and there are plenty of people out there racking up 28 and 3 games match-in and match-out, so it can't be as painful for everyone.

After Battlefield 3's way of creating unforgettable war stories on the fly though, Modern Warfare 3's regimented game of digital paintball is starting to look a wee bit dated. It's understandable why the team didn't want to rock the foundations of its billion dollar baby, but what was once the innovator has now become the middle of the road. That pretty much sums up Modern Warfare 3. Serviceable, enjoyable, predictable. See you all again next year. ●

### 360Zine Verdict

*Diminishing returns don't spoil a cracking campaign, but multi is far from fresh*



Fun, stupid and easy to play



Spec Ops is slick



Multi is losing its appeal

# 80%







# The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

*Redefining the word 'epic'*

**W**riting a review of Bethesda's all-encompassing new RPG poses the same problems as playing it. Just where the hell do you start? Our notebook and in-game quest log are both exhaustingly long. Every time it seems like we're on track, something else pops up even more amazing than the last. So instead of a breakdown of mechanics, systems and

structure, how about a little story? After all, it's these personal moments that define The Elder Scrolls, and they've never been as triumphant and life-affirming as they are here.

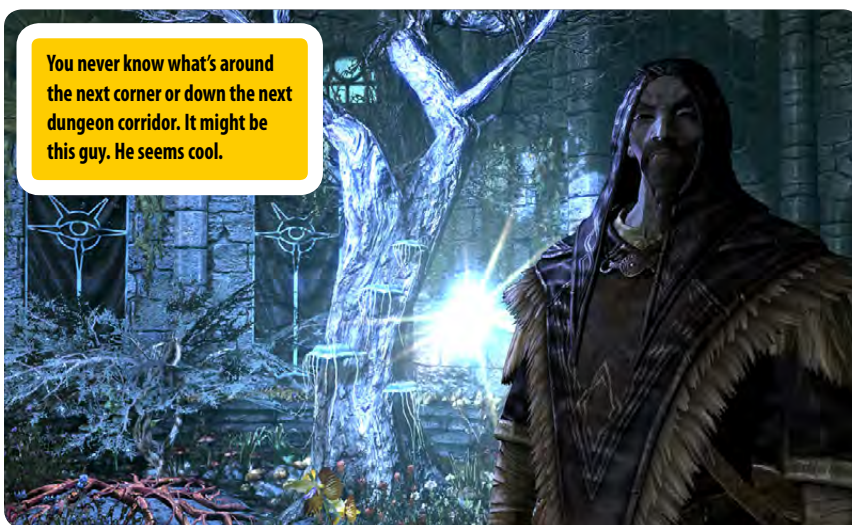
It all began with the Orcs. It's their fault. Our proud Nord warrior is a man of reluctant violence, a friend to the innocent and believer in racial equality.

So, upon stumbling across a small

but well-guarded Orc stronghold in the foot of one of Skyrim's enormous mountains, we were told we could not enter. It was for Orcs, and Orcs alone. However, if we were prepared to risk life and limb in retrieving an ancient artefact from a distant tomb, then the Orc leader would allow us into his home to trade and rest.



You never know what's around the next corner or down the next dungeon corridor. It might be this guy. He seems cool.



## SECOND LIFE

*So much to do, so little time...*



**Blood brothers**



**Magic man**



**Sight seeing**



## Blood brothers

Avoiding the main questline and joining one of Skyrim's many guilds is a right of passage in this or any Elder Scrolls game. They all feature their own quests, characters and even branching paths. Some are good enough that you could package them up as a game in their own right.





Enemies carry their own levels now, unlike Oblivion's scaling baddies. It makes for a tougher game at times, but ultimately a more rewarding one.

Click here to see the enhanced version of this shot!



after a bloody battle. And a rare moment of calm after the storm.

Seconds later, a huge shadow shrouded everything, followed by a thunderous roar. A dragon! Spoiling for a fight, our adventurer looked up into the sky with gritted teeth and sword drawn. Another bloody battle ensued, one that nearly saw the Nord felled, but ended with a killing blow that brought down the winged beast. The dragon's soul was absorbed. The Nord sat back down on that chair, now with a huge dragon's skeleton splayed out in front of him. It was one of the truly great videogaming moments, and it would only ever happen to this one adventurer.

This was not part of Skyrim's main quest. Nor was it a side quest. This was a completely emergent, unscripted moment that won't even happen in anyone else's game. And it's the best thing that has happened in any game in recent memory. That is the power of Skyrim; it's a realisation of Bethesda's work in openworld RPGs over the past two decades. Finally the scope and ambition has been matched by an engine that can conjure moments of

## > Skyrim continued

As a man of pride and friendship, our warrior dutifully took this Orc up on his offer. The tomb was dangerous, and filled with giant spiders and fearsome bandits, but our Nord prevailed and victoriously took the artefact back to the Orcs. He was let into the leader's home. Then, he was set upon, attacked and left for dead.

Those Orcs would pay for what they did. Our adventurer fled the stronghold, knowing he wasn't powerful enough to defeat the Orcs. He joined a guild in a

nearby town and learned new and more devastating spells. His ability with a sword grew stronger. After a few hours, he knew the time was right.

So we travelled back, under the cover of night, to the Orc stronghold. A nightwatchman looked out onto the slopes. A swift pair of arrows to the head took care of him. Then our adventurer crashed through the front door of the Orc leader's home. He burnt his allies in their beds, and then lured the trustless leader out into the freezing tundra. There was only going

to be one winner. The Orcs had been killed, there was no other way. Walking back in to the stronghold, our adventurer saw it fit to sit upon the leader's chair, a moment of reflection

**"It was one of the truly great videogaming moments, and it would only ever happen to this one adventurer..."**

## FREEZE FRAME

Taking you through the game one step at a time...



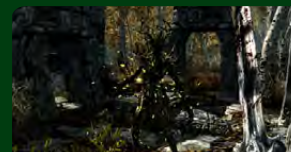
### 10 MINUTES

A nifty set piece gets things moving, and you're unleashed on the vast world of Skyrim.



### 1 HOUR

By now we'd got lost, were killed by a tree thing and shot a chicken in the face with an arrow.



### 10 HOURS

You might well have done the second story mission by this point in the game. You *might* have.



### 40 HOURS

Time has lost all meaning. You live in Skyrim now. It's a cold and wondrous land, and it's yours.



### 100 HOURS

We've not got this far yet, but we fully expect there still to be plenty to do. Enormous.







It's a beautiful world to explore. You can lose hours just wandering around, hunting and gathering.

Skyrim is pretty easy-going when it comes to classes. You're not defined by your race this time around.



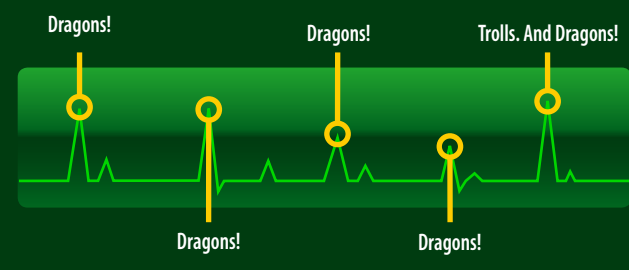
> **Skyrim** continued

unparalleled drama and magnificence at every turn.

Mechanically, you know what to expect. It's a first-person RPG, heavy on melee combat and magic, both of which are easy to use but not exactly refined. It's this relatively perfunctory combat that keeps Skyrim somewhat grounded – if it had the flawless scrapping of a Batman Arkham City the whole game might actually be too much for the human mind to deal with.

Even though its battling is basic, it's never anything short of fun, making you feel powerful and heroic. It's the sense of overwhelming discovery though, that drives you through potentially hundreds of hours in this beautifully realised fantasy word. Unlike previous Elder Scrolls games, this isn't a Tolkien template. Skyrim is the land of the Nords (Vikings, basically) and its world is steeped in a pseudo Norse mythology. It's darker, harder even; a freezing land of wonder, ravaged by civil war and living in fear of the no-longer extinct Dragons. What you

**PULSOMETER** *Signs of life*



do is up to you, but there's almost no character without a quest, no town without a story and no dungeon without a hidden past. We lost two hours just talking to people in one small settlement, trying to work out if the game's rebel uprising were actually nazis. We still haven't decided.

What brings people together in a game like Skyrim, though, are those stories. Every battle-hardened adventurer will have tales to tell of Trolls or Dwarves or Giants or Elves. Skyrim makes you feel like whatever you're doing, you're the only one that will ever experience it. It's the best openworld game ever made, the best RPG ever made and one of finest games ever made. Now let's hear your tales... ●



**360Zine Verdict**

Phenomenal. A wondrous world from the masters of the craft

Breathtakingly enormous

Immersive like nothing else

Combat is basic, not that it matters

97%



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Publisher: Ubisoft

Developer:

Ubisoft Montreal

Heritage: Assassin's Creed

Link: [www.assassinscreed.ubi.com](http://www.assassinscreed.ubi.com)

OUT NOW

# Assassin's Creed Revelations

*The fourth cut is the deepest...*

**T**he whole concept of the yearly 'franchise' is pretty much a product of this console generation. Apart from sports games and their yearly roster updates, stuff from the same series used to hang back for a couple of years to let people miss them a little bit. But that's definitely not the case any more.

Ezio Auditore never met the person who came up with 'absence makes the heart grow fonder'. Or if he did, he plunged a concealed dagger into his throat before the poor chap had got past 'ab'. He's back for the third year in a row, a lot older, still as agile and still as violent. Desmond's back too, trapped in some weird Animus purgatory with

Click here to see the enhanced version of this shot!



**"Many of Brotherhood's innovations return"**

No wonder he's got a headache in all that armour. Idiot.

your travels, and you can use them to chuck bombs together which in turn you can chuck on your opponents. They all have different properties and can be used in different ways. It's an unexpected but welcome addition to an already bizarrely packed game.

More controversial are the stronghold missions, which are tower defense in all but name. You take out enemies to earn enough currency

Subject 16. It's a neat if somewhat confusing conceit that allows you to jump between locations and even characters without too much narrative concern. Not that Assassin's Creed has ever been particularly worried about a plot hole here and there.

Things kick off in Constantinople, after a brief sortie to Altair's homeland of Acre, and before long you'll be hopping across buildings, swinging on pot plants and sticking blades directly into the cerebellum of anyone who looks at you the wrong way.

Many of Brotherhood's surprising innovations return, so there's an element of territory capture, assassins you can recruit and shops to mend and use. Joining these are Revelations' two main additions: bombcraft and the tower defense-like stronghold battles.

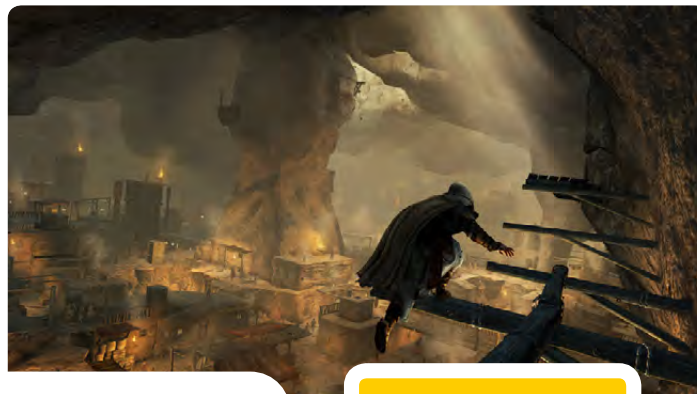
The former is simple enough, as it's essentially alchemy. You find ingredients and 'recipes' throughout







Assassin's Creed does moody very well, although the sound mix is still heavy on ambient dialogue.



You know how the free-running works by now. Hold R, move forward, look cool...



## > Revelations continued

to place more of your team around different parts of the buildings that make up the static battleground. Victory comes from clever tactical placement of barriers and high-level troops. It's a weird inclusion, another example of Assassin's Creed being a game that's never really been sure of its own identity, but equally one that doesn't want to be pigeonholed. And, most importantly, it works and it's fun. Just not as fun as free-running about murdering dignitaries.

Is it enough to make the fourth Assassin's Creed in five years a relevant and vibrant inclusion in the winter schedule? Just about. It is starting to feel a little stale, but that core gameplay is enough to sustain one more parkour-fuelled jaunt through the Middle East and the Med. This is the end of Ezio's protracted story though, and if you've been keeping up, there are some tasty, yes, revelations to get

**"One more parkour-fuelled jaunt through the Middle East..."**

your teeth into. Although if you have managed to keep up with the story, you deserve some sort of degree.

Finishing up the package is a steadily improving and unique multiplayer mode which offers a nice change of pace from Modern Warfare, Battlefield et al, and will hopefully get the airtime it deserves.

Will we see Assassin's next year then? This is a series that feels like it needs a break, some time to dust off and come back fresh and strong. Let's hope it's allowed to. ●

Click here to see the enhanced version of this shot!



**360Zine  
Verdict**

*Rougher than before, but still packed with ideas and improving multiplayer*

- 👍 Vast world, filled with unusual ideas
- 👍 Unique, compelling multiplayer
- 👎 Starting to feel samey

**87%**





# Halo: CE Anniversary



*Can the best possibly get better?*

It only takes five minutes. Five minutes for the realisation to kick in. Five minutes to remember that shooters don't need to be vacuous, rollercoaster rides pulling you from one explosion to the next. 10 years on, Halo: Combat Evolved still lives up to that moniker, because 10 years on, nothing (apart from its own sequels) has

matched it. This is one of the truly special videogames, and 343 Industries have given it the treatment it deserves.

Before we continue the love in, let's get a couple of niggles out of the way first. The framerate matches the original's, meaning it will drop from time to time in busier firefights. There's some less-than-stellar signposting. And

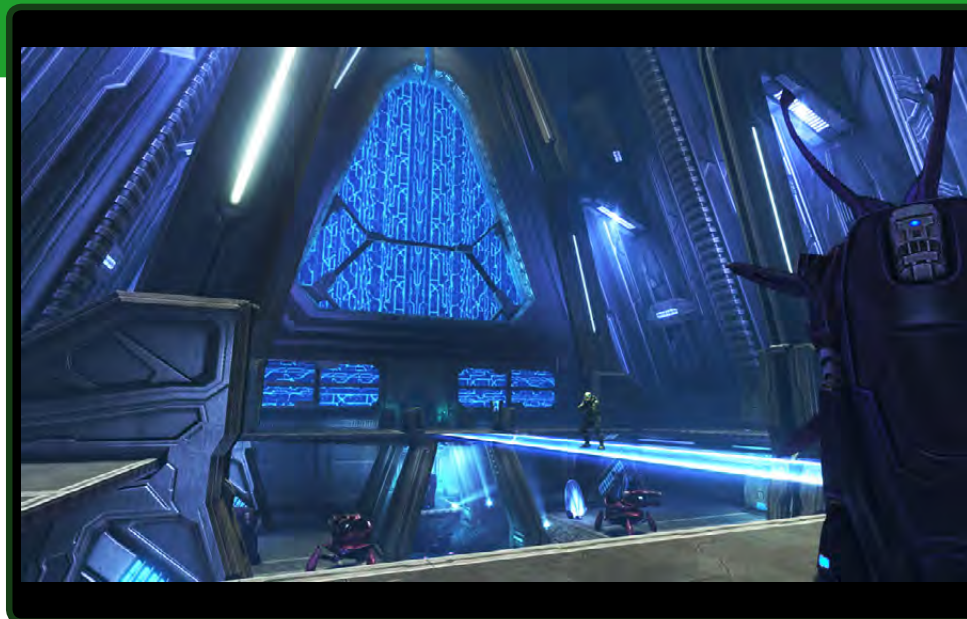
the acting isn't exactly remarkable. Apart from that though, this is still somehow one of the finest FPS campaigns you can play today.

Bungie used to call it the '30 seconds of fun' – the idea that you can build an entire game around repeated actions if those actions are so enjoyable you want to do them over and over again. It's a slightly unfair way of looking at the game though, as few shooters have ever given you the freedom of expression and creativity that Halo does. It may be asking you to take on the same enemies time after time, but how you approach that will never be repeated.

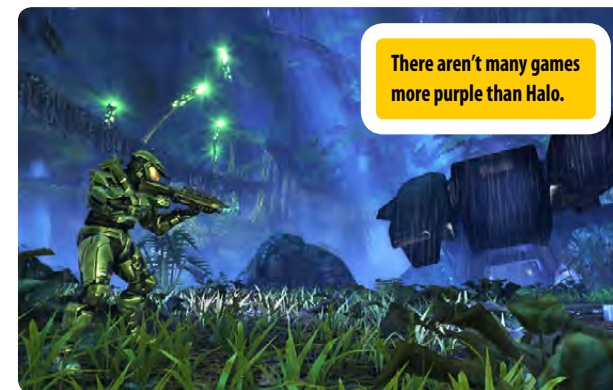
If somehow you've never played Halo: Combat Evolved, then there are a few things you should know. It's a simpler game than its sequels, relying less on set-piece flair and more on open battles against fiercely intelligent AI. It introduced the concept of

recharging health, the two-weapon limit and the rifle-butt melee, and it gave us one of gaming's great stars, the silent superhero that is Master Chief, as well as the first-person shooter's finest ever enemy, the chortling, menacing geniuses that are the Covenant Elite.

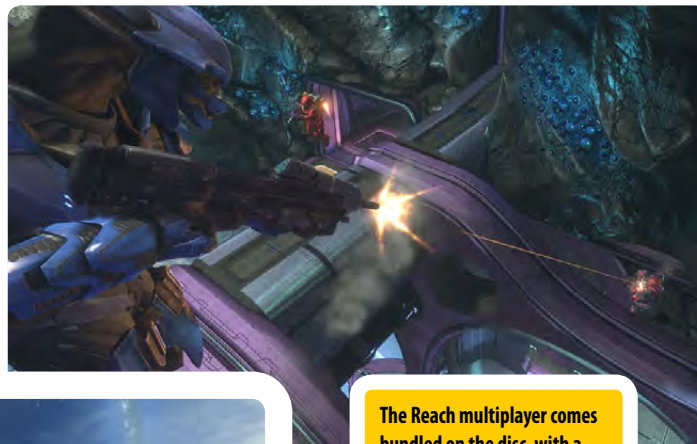
The word genius gets thrown around all too often, but when you're getting outsmarted – *genuinely* outsmarted – by 10-year-old enemy



There aren't many games more purple than Halo.







**"The FPS's finest ever enemy, the chortling, menacing geniuses that are the Covenant Elite"**

of Halo, but having all that content there on a budget release is admirable. It's fully compatible with those still playing Reach itself, too.

In truth though, this is about the main event, the fabulous retread through one of gaming's true greats. Part history lesson, part nostalgia trip, but wholly the best first-person shooter campaign to come out this winter period. Not bad for an old boy, is it? ●

One of the most memorable scenes from the original game, brought right up to date.



The Reach multiplayer comes bundled on the disc, with a handful of classic Halo maps.

## > Halo continued

Al then you know there's something magical going on in that code. And it is the same code. 343 have simply layered a hi-def, normal-mapped sheen over the original game, and if you want to see how far it has come, a jab of the back button is all it takes to see Halo in its former glory. It's a weird sensation, because the respray is how the mind's eye sees Halo, but actually going back and seeing those rudimentary low-poly models and duplo structures is eye-opening. It's a frivolous feature, but one that says more about the game's history than any documentary or talking-head interview ever could.

Rounding off the package is Halo Reach's multiplayer, cruelly abandoned by many last year in favour of the ludicrously addictive Black Ops. Classic Halo maps have been given the Reach treatment, and there are options to play Halo the 'old way'. It's probably not why you'd invest in an Anniversary edition



Roll over screen for annotations



**360Zine Verdict**

A fantastic way to enjoy one of gaming's greats

- A worthy respray
- Still magical campaign
- Some framerate issues

**90%**



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**Publisher:** Ubisoft  
**Developer:** In-house  
**Heritage:** Beyond  
Good and Evil  
**Link:** <http://raymanorigins.uk.ubi.com>  
**OUT NOW**

# Rayman Origins

*Don't worry, he's armless...*

**W**as Rayman always this weird? It's hard to remember. We used to accept hallucinogenic levels of surrealism in our games as readily as a couple of sugars in our tea, but in these modern times of modern warfare, something as odd as this feels like a left hook to the chin.

In all honesty though, it's only surface oddness. Rayman's limless

leaping around beautifully hand-drawn worlds is brimming with character and Gallic humour, but underneath is a strong and steady platformer that rarely puts a foot wrong.

It's designed for four-player co-op, and is definitely more fun with others, but Rayman Origins is still a pleasant chunk of nostalgic retrotainment when you're on your own. It's fully aware that

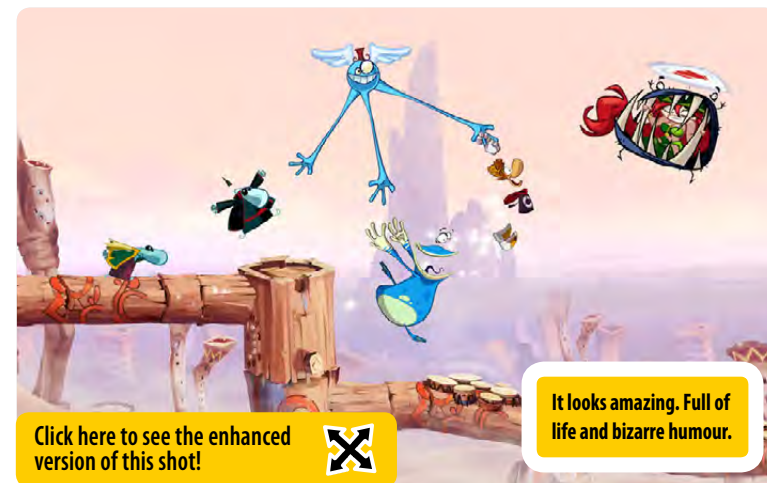
you know what to do, and just lets you get on with it.

The lack of hand-holding is nice, actually. Anyone who doesn't know to travel to the right, jump over the gaps and avoid the angry-faced bad guys has some serious videogame history to lose themselves in. And for the other 99.99 per cent, the challenge comes not from knowing what to do, but simply from having the skill to do it.

After a sedate and slightly overdrawn opening stage, Rayman Origins quickly picks up the pace. The armless wonder is a fragile little Frenchman, and it'll only take one touch (or two if you've found a little heart to follow you about) from a nasty to send him ballooning back to the beginning of the level. In a world where gaming ills are cured by hiding behind a wall for two seconds, the savagery comes as a bit of a shock.

Before long though, you'll be back in the swing of things, and it'll feel like 1992 all over again, albeit a 1992

*"Brimming with character and Gallic humour, but underneath is a strong and steady platformer"*



Click here to see the enhanced version of this shot!



It looks amazing. Full of life and bizarre humour.



painted by artists rather than built by pixel-brickies. Rayman Origins does what all good platformers should, it lets you fall into that flow where you can see the path the designers have laid out for you, like code in the Matrix. You time your jumps without thinking – you just react. It's never quite Mario or even Sonic (good Sonic), but it's definitely got that little something that you rarely feel in gaming these days.

Is it enough to make it stand out? Possibly not. As an XBLA release, Rayman Origins would have been a masterpiece, but as it is, it's a pricey slice of old-fashioned fun. ●

## 360Zine Verdict

*Great fun in small bursts, and looks beautiful, too*



Gorgeous looking



Solid co-op and single-player modes



It's no Mario

# 77%



# PREVIEWED! MASS EFFECT 3

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# SAINTS ROW

## THE THIRD

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE  
FROM THE PUBLISHER OF 360ZINE AND P3ZINE



**WIN**  
Saints Row  
booty up for  
grabs!



**EXCLUSIVE HANDS-ON**

Unprecedented access to  
2011's cheekiest game!



**INTERVIEW!**

The developers speak  
exclusively inside!



"Everything has been crafted to offer the most enjoyable and varied openworld experience possible"

# WELCOME

Volition's Saints Row has always been considered the sillier brother of Rockstar's Grand Theft Auto series and with the third game that tactic hasn't changed. This is an action game that isn't trying to outdo Hollywood with believable characters and serious dialogue, instead everything has been crafted to offer the most enjoyable and varied openworld experience possible.

In this exciting supplement we'll take you through everything this interactive playground has to offer, including exciting new side activities, new characters and Professor Genki's special brand of explosive treats. THQ were kind enough to give us exclusive access to a near final build of Saints Row: The Third and we were absolutely blown away by what we played. This is without a doubt 2011's funniest openworld experience.

Obviously this isn't exactly a wholesome family offering, but as long as you don't mind the occasional sight of gimps running down the street chased by a pack of prostitutes flaunting purple dildo bats, then we guarantee you'll fall in love with this game. So without further ado, let's set forth on our journey of self discovery together, and remember whatever you see in the following pages may not be strictly PG, but it certainly falls under the header of good harmless fun!

Andy Griffiths, Editor

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# SOME WORDS FROM PROFESSOR GENKI!

## Salutations Contestant!

As the only feline with a masters degree, I feel it's imperative that I welcome you to the madcap craziness that is Saints Row: The Third.

Gangs, police, SWAT and the occupational army known as STAG will be at your throats from the moment you exit the safehouse, so why not come fully prepared? No, I'm not talking about shotguns, pistols or even the SA3-AirStrike contraption - where's the fun in those? I'm talking about my own creations, which not only kill your target but also humiliate them for the comical amusement of yourself and all those around you!

There's the 'Mollusk Launcher', which may look like a regular, slightly 'genkified' bazooka, but rather than shooting explosive shells, it actually shoots novelty octopuses that stupefy enemies, turning them into your allies shortly before they explode! Next up we have the always-amusing Super Ballistic Manapult, which functions like a mobile rocket launcher and uses people as ammo. Simply drive along, pick up pedestrians with my contraption's patented 'kitty mouth vacuum' and shoot them out of the cannon above the cockpit, causing them to splatter on any surroundings they come into contact with.







And all this is capped off with the super sleek 'Leisure Stunt Suit', which even includes a super lifelike Genki mask! Now, all these items are only available to those who show their faith in Genki's work early, so be sure to pre-order *Saints Row: The Third* to get the comedic edge in the chaotic city of Steelport.

Oh and don't forget to check in on my very special gameshow, *Super Ethical Reality Climax*, where you need to stomp my mascot minions in quick succession with a variety of different weaponry before the timer runs out or you expire due to your own incompetence. It's a risky, inexcusably fun job, but somebody has to do it and I've chosen you! Go, go lucky super contestant!

*The one and only Professor Genki*

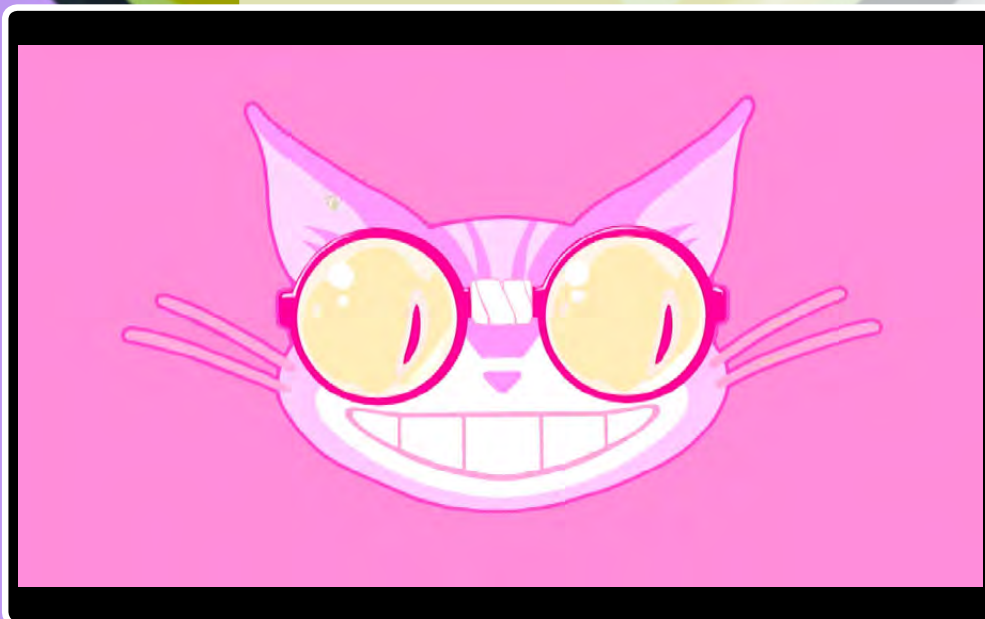
## HAVE YOUR SAY!

Pre-order bonuses are all the rage, but which bits get you most excited? Tell us your favourite, and we'll pass on the results to THQ.

Which of Professor Genki's crazy bonus weapons most floats your boat?

- ☐ A: Super Ballistic Manapault
- ☐ B: Octopuss Cannon
- ☐ C: Leisure Stunt Suit
- ☐ Let me know the results please!

Your email address (if you want the results):



CONTROL →





# LAST TIME ON THE ROW

**D**id you know Saints Row began life as a PlayStation 2 project named 'Bling, Bling'? How about the fact that a GameCube entry was in development until the plans were scuppered by the emergence of the Wii? We didn't think so. but worry not, as this short history feature will tell you all you need to know about this beloved series.

Saints Row is a name that's synonymous with gamers everywhere, yet to properly understand how it has evolved, you need to go back to 2006 – a time when Microsoft were preparing their second console and when HD visuals were something that only AV guys were aware of. It seems that five years is a very long time...



## Saints Row

**Released: 2006 | Developer: Volition Inc**

This Xbox 360 exclusive was THQ's and Microsoft's answer to Grand Theft Auto – then exclusive to the PS3. The trademark openworld gameplay which set players loose on a grand urban setting was all here with cars to jack, NPCs to toy with and missions to be completed involving an array of colourful characters.

For starters, players could create their own character and put them in-game, rather than being lumped with an angsty anti-hero. Your freshly moulded character appeared on the streets of Stilwater and became involved with a street gang 'The 3rd Street Saints', led by Julius and his three key captains: Johnny Gat, Dex Jackson and Troy Bradshaw. The 32 missions take the Saints over each area of the city, spilling plenty of blood along the way.

This was definitely the most serious Saints Row of the bunch with a host of Hollywood talent lending their likenesses and voices to the game including Mila Kunis, Michael Clarke Duncan and Keith David. Saints Row received widespread critical acclaim for its competitive multiplayer modes and great production values, but the next game took a very different approach...



## Saints Row 2

**Released: 2008 | Developer: Volition Inc**

Rather than placing an emphasis on competitive multiplayer, for Saints Row 2 Volition went down the co-operative route, with players able to wreck Stilwater to their heart's content with a friend in tow. This inclusion was an instant hit, and when coupled with the altogether sillier tone of the side activities (Septic Avenger anyone?), the series had finally found its true identity. The plot reintroduced your created hero from the first game and with the aid of some emergency plastic surgery, he or she was back tackling an all-new selection of criminal gangs. The voice talent was also a major step-up with Eliza Dushku and Neil Patrick Harris added to the returning cast.

The original's lewd behaviour was put into overdrive for this multi-format release and gamers everywhere were bowled over by Saints Row 2's no-nonsense, all-fun formula. Little did we know that this series was going to get even more over-the-top in 2011... ●





# LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

We quiz *The Third's* writer Drew Holmes on what makes this *Saints Row* the best yet

**Saints Row: The Third features a brand new engine. Can you tell us what the advantages are of utilising this new tech?**

We've built the engine from the ground up with openworld games in mind, incorporating a lot of the things that we've learned while working on *Saints Row* and *Saints Row 2*. We know what works and what doesn't, so we've optimised the engine to take advantage of that stuff. Iteration is the big selling point in terms of our tech.

Previously, everything was built in 3ds Max, so once a portion of the city was done, it was done. It took us weeks and weeks to go back and change stuff. This time around, if a section of gameplay isn't working then we can rip it out, and it's super fast for our artists to build stuff and our designers to iterate. Our animation team has been killing it by throwing in lots of new animations and custom stuff like melee actions, wrestling moves, throwing people across the street, etc. And that helps with a lot of the fluidity and the feel of movement, so it looks a lot more natural in terms of how you move through the city.

In terms of the engine, it's pushing the look and also the gameplay, giving us a more stylised and distinct feel right across the board.

**The other element which has been hinted at but not really talked about in detail is the RPG factor for *Saints Row: The Third*. Can you break down how it will work? Will it be like *GTA: San Andreas*, with avatars getting fatter if they eat too much, etc.**

The way that element works is that body customisation is completely up to you. If you want to make a fat person that's fine, but you only eat for health.

In terms of customised play, this time around respect is used essentially as currency, not to unlock missions as it was previously. Respect is now used to upgrade gang weaponry, homie abilities and your stronghold. When it comes to the activities and missions themselves, you can play right through those; it doesn't conflict at all.

**Have you changed that aspect so that side-missions feel more incorporated with the main campaign?**

Yeah, this time we're making everything more cohesive, in





## > Interview continued

terms of the way that you play through the game. When you do anything in the city, you'll be rewarded with new districts. It's going to be focused on wherever you're playing – whether you're taking part in activities or going around screwing with people – you're going to be rewarded control for that area. Before, you would complete a mission and then be rewarded a district on completely the other side of the map and it felt weird and disjointed. Now it works altogether, in terms of how you take over the city.

### Will players still have to fight to keep districts under their control?

There will be a lot of different options, so you can customise how you want to take over the city and make it your own.

### As you've mentioned before, the Saints have become an international franchise within the game's lore. Does that allow you to do a lot more funny things with media and radio stations in-game?

We've got a giant stable of radio commercials that build up Saints Row as a brand. A lot of world building goes on in the background, in terms of setting up where the Saints are, and also the other brands in the universe and how they fight against each other into trying to monopolise the entire world.

The idea that the Saints are a brand is ingrained into the world. In a mission a fan might ask for an autograph – everyone knows who the Saints are. They might not like them, but they tolerate them.

### It's very interesting how they have evolved, as the Saints started out

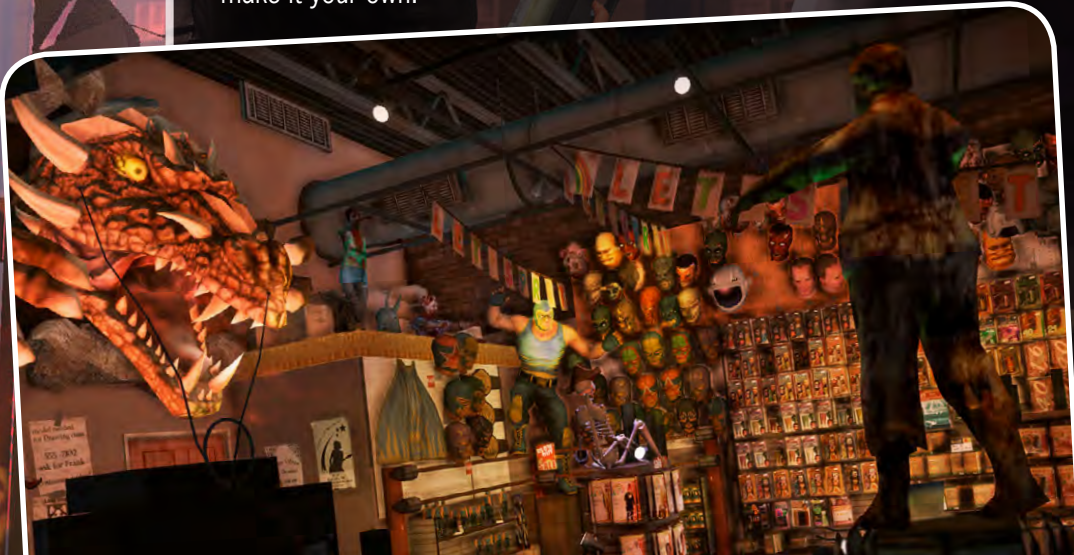
### as an underground thing and now they are almost like a company building a franchise...

Yeah, they branched out; they've globalised. The Saints are indicative of the cult of the celebrity. They are in love with themselves, and as a result the world is in love with them as well. It's all about what is over-the-top and what is crazy. If it makes people laugh, we're seriously going to consider putting it in the game. This time around the dark and weird things that didn't necessarily fit the theme of the Saints Row 2 are all out of the window. The Third has a very cohesive look, making things fun and enjoyable. We don't want you to ever stop smiling or having fun.

### How different is Steelport from the previous game's setting of Stilwater?

The amount of gameplay we've packed in is a lot different from what we had in Stilwater. You won't necessarily be driving across great distances to get

to the next activity, as there's always going to be something to do in that immediate area you are in. It's a lot more about maximising the space rather than building a giant city where there will be a lot of dead space. We want players to always be engaged and having fun with something. ●





# THE 3RD STREET SAINTS: THE GOOD GUYS



**Click on the buttons to learn more about  
your allies in Steelport**





# INTRODUCING THE SYNDICATE: THE BAD GUYS

Click on the buttons to learn more about the Saints' competition



**The Lucadores**



**Morning Star**



**The Deckers**





# PLAYTEST



**Format:** PC, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3

**Publisher:** THQ

**Developer:** Volition Inc

**Heritage:** Saints Row series, Red Faction series

**Link:** [www.saintsrow.com](http://www.saintsrow.com)

**ETA:** 18th November

**S**aints Row: The Third is bonkers, there isn't another word to describe it. With Steelport, Volition has created a world which is jam-packed with more bad language, crass humour and varied gameplay than any other we've had the pleasure of setting foot in, yet the further we immersed ourselves, the crazier and more unpredictable proceedings became. However, before we get ahead of ourselves and you get over excited, why don't you settle down and we'll tell you all about it?

Suspension of disbelief is a sensation most gamers are all too aware of, but Saints Row: The Third takes it to all-new levels. The first two missions of the campaign are prime examples of this, as like previous games in this gangster-themed series, the adventure starts with you, Johnny Gat and co. robbing a bank (which in itself is done as a publicity stunt!). However, rather than opening the vault on location, they decide to steal the room-sized safe with a cargo helicopter. It would be easy to think that this beginning, which involved dozens of SWAT being slain, wasn't typical of the rest of the campaign, yet the next mission involves escaping from a 747 and skydiving to safety. This isn't a game which does things by halves, and that angle is exacerbated by the Saints

now being recognised as international superstars, with their own clothing line, energy drink and a movie in production.

After the opening linear prologue, gamers are set loose to do pretty much whatever they wish. If you want more of the story you can partake in 56 different missions – which get increasingly over-the-top with the stakes associated with the three rival gangs getting higher and higher as you progress – but you can also

*"This isn't a game which does things by halves"*

just mess around with the imaginative arsenal of weapons or tackle the side activities, which we've detailed elsewhere in this magazine. There's a ton of grade-A content to sift through here and wisely all the tools are here to give you the sort of fun which seems most natural to you.

First off there's the character creator, which allows players to customise their avatar with hundreds of different items of clothing, tattoos, hats and fancy dress. The silliness doesn't end there though, as you can also customise your entire gang to look as absurd as you do with their own celebratory or derogatory emotes to match. Ninjas, wrestlers, BDSM fanatics and mascots are all able to join your posse if needs be. This

## WHORED MODE



In addition to the campaign mode, there's also a standalone wave-based survival mode, suitably dubbed 'Whored Mode'. In this mode you and some friends can battle against 30



different waves of zombies, hookers, wrestlers, mascots, gimps and gang members with pre-selected weaponry. There are plenty of modifiers in play here too, so pay attention.





"Tanks, choppers, bikes and cardinal outfits were just some of the more pedestrian items we unlocked"

## THIRD TIME'S A CHARM

Reasons why *Saints Row: The Third* outperforms its predecessor



Funny business

Moral choices

Character sharing

### Funny business

*Saints Row: The Third* is genuinely funny. It doesn't matter if you're looking at the massive array of weapons, the consistently original characters or the bizarre tangents *The Third's* story explores. Everything is designed to put a smile on your face and most of the time it works.

### > PLAYTEST continued

customisation potential also expands into the vehicular realm, with cars, vans and trucks also able to be customised via the helpful garage firm, Rimjobs.

What makes this customisation angle even more addictive is the new XP-based progression mechanic which means the game is always falling over itself to reward the player for doing what comes natural in an openworld: causing carnage. Every destructive action gets you closer to ranking up and being able to purchase new abilities. Completing side activities, missions and levelling up also unlocks new clothing items, weapons and vehicles to be added automatically to your crib's storehouse, resulting in them being always available to you later on. Tanks, choppers, bikes and cardinal outfits were just some of the more pedestrian items we unlocked and you'll want to flaunt these when playing with your friends online. Speaking of which, every mission and side activity can be enjoyed with a friend whose playing online, and even if you just want to cruise around Steelport punching civilians in the crouch with the ever-ready 'Awesome Button', well by golly he or she can join you for that too.

All of these features would be for nought if the gameplay wasn't up to standard, but thankfully that isn't the case at all. Guns, even the sillier ones, feel impactful without compromising the game's light and fluffy atmosphere and vehicle handling is much improved over the last game. Motorcycles feeling twitchy yet vulnerable,







## > PLAYTEST continued

whereas lorries and bulkier vehicles are heavy and powerful. Even the varied array of aircraft feel enjoyable to control, and make commuting between different activities on the map a complete breeze.

The core components of a great openworld action game are all here and accounted for but what sets the game apart is just how much variation Volition have chucked into the campaign. Just when you begin to think you know what's just around the corner there will be a

new weapon, enemy, gameplay mechanic or jaw-dropping celebrity cameo to make you reconsider your position. Throughout the campaign you'll always be enjoying yourself and

savouring the fact that you have no idea what comes next. That's the benefit of Volition carefully crafting four such substantially different enemy groups, and us gamers get to reap the unpredictable pay-off.

Volition has continued their 'fun for fun's sake' approach to development with Saints Row: The Third. We found it refreshing to play a game which knows it's a piece entertainment and tries to offer players as much gameplay value as possible. We wish more developers would take that approach, and when you finally get your hands on this ballsy tongue-in-cheek experience we're positive you'll think the same. ●

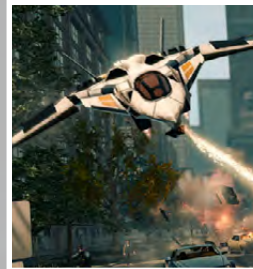
"The core components of a great openworld action game are all here and accounted for"

## OUR FAVOURITE WEAPONS AND VEHICLES



### CHAINSAW

What can be said about the humble chainsaw that hasn't been said before? Not a lot it seems, but when you're chopping up pedestrians and other gang members to bits you won't mind our lack of imagination.



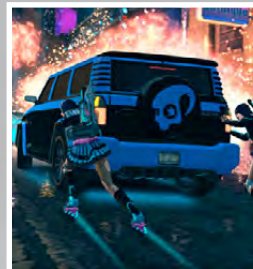
### F-29 VTOL

This transforming jet can transition from flight mode to hover mode instantly and boasts homing missiles and an uber-destructive death ray. It's nimble, powerful, can seat two people and makes cool transformer sounds when it switches modes.



### VIPER LASER RIFLE

Weapons don't come much more versatile than this little baby! She looks cool, has good range and can be fired 22 times before requiring a brief period to cool down. Best of all, the ammo is plentiful for our personal weapon of choice.



### KAYAK

The attentive among you will recognise that isn't actually a boat, but actually a 4x4 wagon which belongs to the Deckers. We fell in love with it, mainly due to the Tron paint scheme and the skater girls who attach themselves to the rear.



### MOLLUSK LAUNCHER

Using this pink bazooka constantly made us burst out into fits of laughter, mainly because the octopus ammo constantly mutters childish apologies to its victims before making them do your bidding and eventually expiring in a shower of blood and bone.



### CHALLENGER

Most openworld games have tanks, but Saints Row: The Third's is better than most. It can pancake cars easily, sports a massive cannon and a machine gun. There's even room for two players, so you don't have to leave your buddy behind.



### GL G20

This heavy weapon spurts out grenades quicker than the human eye can blink and can annihilate a tank's health bar in a handful of seconds. Certainly something to pick up whenever you see a careless brute drop it after he's passed on.



### SPECTER

Hands up if you've always wanted a hover bike? All of you huh? Yep, us too. This baby can switch between hover and flight mode and also packs a mini-gun. She's smaller and faster than her F-29 VTOL cousin.





# SUPER SIDE ACTIVITIES

Every openworld action gamer knows that sometimes, no matter how good a campaign and its respective missions can be, occasionally you just want to let loose some carnage in a short measured burst. That's exactly what each of Saints Row: The Third's different activities are all about, and there's over 50 of the blighters to get stuck into. Today we're going to share with you what each of the 12 different varieties we discovered in a recent preview build entail, and needless to say they're all incredibly good fun.

Each activity is replicated three times on the map with the objectives getting more challenging as the player completes each one. Usually whenever an activity is completed you'll earn a bonus – a new member added to your crew, a new weapon added to your arsenal or a new vehicle. We sampled each of the activities when playing on our own, but each is more than ready to accommodate co-operative play.

- ESCORT
- ESCORT II
- HELI ASSAULT
- INSURANCE FRAUD
- MAYHEM
- PROFESSOR
- GENKI'S S.E.R.C.
- SNATCH
- SNATCH II
- TANK MAYHEM
- TRAFFICKING
- TRAIL BLAZING
- TRAIL BLAZING II





# COMPETITION!



## WIN A COPY OF SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD AND AN SR3 GOODIE BAG!

Seeing as you've now gotten a taste of what Saints Row: The Third is all about, we suspect you're champing at the bit to give this year's craziest game a try. Thankfully we've got a very special competition to offer exactly that, with five copies of the game on a format of your choice and a handful of real-life dildo bats, a set of Bobbleheads, a Saints Row: The Third T-shirt and a pair of Saints Row: The Third sunglasses up for grabs!

For full competition terms and conditions, please visit [www.gamerzines.com](http://www.gamerzines.com)

